







I'VE HAD ENOUGH, USHIWAKA! THIS IS WHERE YOU AND ME ARE GONNA PART WAYS!

I WOUND UP DOING ALL THE HARD WORK LAST TIME...

SO THIS TIME I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP, OR ANYONE'S HELP!!



LISTEN, BENTA. IF YOU GET CAUGHT AGAIN, BOTH YOU AND OBU'S HEADS'LL BE PUT ON A PIKE AND DISPLAYED AT KAWARA IN KYOTO. YOU UNDERSTAND?

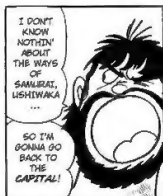


I'VE HEARD ENOUGH OUTA YOU, USHIWAKA! JUST SHADDUP!



LISTEN, BENTA... NOBODY'S GONNA EXECUTE OBU RIGHT AWAY. EVEN IF WE DON'T DO ANYTHING TO SAVE HER, SHE'S IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER...

AND BESIDES, I DON'T PLAN TO STAY IN OSHU FOREVER. THE TAIRA CLAN'S ON ITS LAST LEGS, AND AS SOON AS THEY LOSE A LITTLE MORE POWER, ONE OF THE MINAMOTO FAMILIES'LL RISE UP AND WIPE 'EM OUT! AND THAT'LL BE OUR CHANCE TO RESCUE YOUR SWEETHEART!

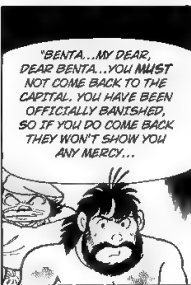


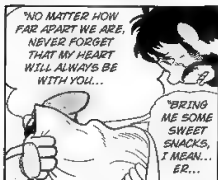
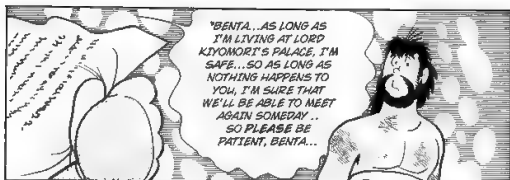
I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN' ABOUT THE WAYS OF SAMURAI, USHIWAKA...

SO I'M GONNA GO BACK TO THE CAPITAL!



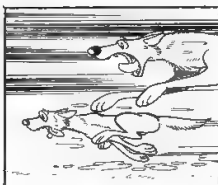
(PSSST)... KICHUJI. ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT THIS GUY?

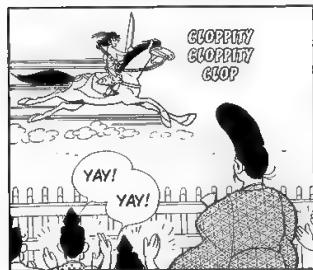
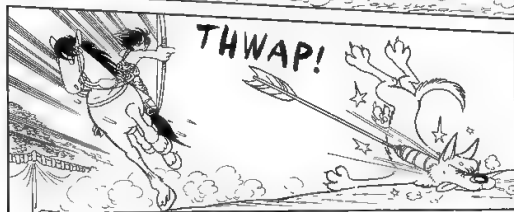
















YOU DO  
HONOR TO  
YOUR  
HERITAGE,  
YOUNG MAN.

YOUR  
HORSEMANSHIP  
AND AIM ARE BOTH  
SUPERB! I'M  
ALWAYS  
IMPRESSED

HUMPH!  
WELL, TO  
TELL THE  
TRUTH, I'M  
GETTING  
TIRED OF  
SHOOTING  
DOGS AND  
BOAR \*



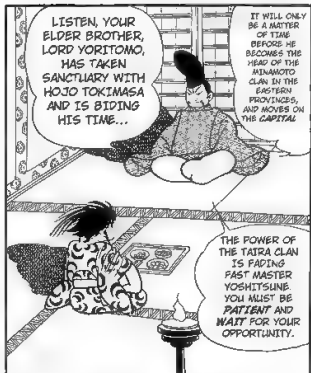
I CAN'T WAIT  
TO GATHER  
REAL  
SOLDIERS  
ABOUT ME  
AND START  
KILLING  
SOME Taira.



IT'S STILL  
TOO SOON  
FOR THAT,  
YOUNG  
MASTER...



MAYBE, BUT  
I DON'T WANT  
TO SPEND THE  
REST OF MY  
LIFE  
ROTTING  
AWAY IN  
THIS OUT-  
OF-THE-WAY  
PLACE.



LISTEN, YOUR  
ELDER BROTHER,  
LORD YORITOMO,  
HAS TAKEN  
SANCTUARY WITH  
HOJO TOKIMASA  
AND IS BIDDING  
HIS TIME...

IT WILL ONLY  
BE A MATTER  
OF TIME  
BEFORE HE  
BECOMES THE  
HEAD OF THE  
MINAMOTO  
CLAN IN THE  
EASTERN  
PROVINCES,  
AND MOVES ON  
TO THE CAPITAL

THE POWER OF  
THE Taira CLAN  
IS FADING  
FAST MASTER  
YOSHITSUNE.  
YOU MUST BE  
PATIENT AND  
WAIT FOR YOUR  
OPPORTUNITY.



WELL... I'M A  
MINAMOTO, AND AFTER  
MY FATHER WAS  
KILLED, THE Taira  
CLAN TOOK ME AND MY  
BROTHER APART,  
BANISHED MY BROTHER  
TO IZU, AND PUT ME IN  
THE CARE OF A TEMPLE  
ON MT. KIRAMA...

THANKS TO THE Taira,  
MY WHOLE FAMILY  
WAS **SCATTERED**,  
AND ALL I'VE DONE  
FOR THE LAST FIVE  
YEARS IS SIT  
AROUND, **RAGING**  
INSIDE...



I TRULY  
SYMPATHIZE



HEHEH. I DON'T  
THINK ANYONE  
LIKE YOU CAN  
UNDERSTAND  
HOW MUCH WE  
MINAMOTO HATE  
THE TAIRA CLAN.

AH, BUT  
I CAN  
IMAGINE.

AND THAT IS  
WHY I HAVE  
HOSTED YOU  
HERE  
AS AN  
ALLY.



MY LORD! WHY  
DO YOU TOLERATE  
SUCH  
IMPERTINENCE IN  
THAT ARROGANT  
YOUNG MAN? AND  
WHY SHELTER HIM  
HERE? HE ACTS  
LIKE A WILD  
MOUNTAIN  
MONKEY!

USE YOUR  
HEAD THE  
TAIRA  
CLAN IS  
LOSING  
ITS GRIP  
ON  
POWER...



...AND THE  
MINAMOTO  
ARE ON THE  
RISE IF  
WE TAKE CARE  
OF YOUNG  
YOSHITSUNE  
NOW...



THE MINAMOTO WILL  
BE IN OUR DEBT  
AT THE VERY LEAST.  
WE SHOULD TAKE CARE  
OF HIM HERE, AND  
ENSURE HIS SAFE  
PASSAGE TO IZU.  
HEH HEH HEH



YO,  
USHI-  
HAKA.

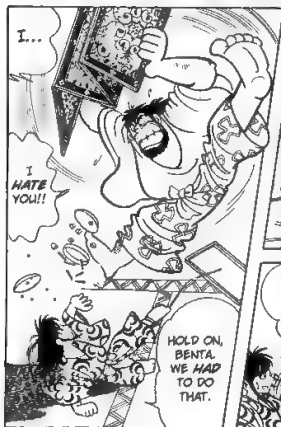
HELLO.  
BENTA, COME,  
SIT DOWN.



SO WHAT DID LORD HIDEHIRA  
SAY? DID HE SAY WHEN WE  
CAN GO TO THE CAPITAL?

RELAX  
HAVE  
SOME  
SAKE.







YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN  
WHAT YOU CAN HERE  
IN OSHU ABOUT  
MILITARY MATTERS.  
AND FACE OUR  
ENEMIES AS A  
FULL-FLEDGED  
SAMURAI.

IT'S THE ONLY  
WAY YOU CAN  
POSSIBLY SAVE  
OBU. THINK  
ABOUT IT!  
YOU KNOW  
I'M RIGHT,  
DON'T YOU?



S...SO  
WHAT  
SHOULD  
I DO?

FIRST OF  
ALL, YOUR  
NAME FROM  
NOW ON  
WILL BE  
**IIMORI  
BENTA  
YAMAIMO\***

I'LL HAVE  
KICHIJI  
GET YOU A  
SWORD AND  
A SUIT OF  
ARMOR



NO,  
KUSHIWAKA!  
I DON'T  
MIND THE  
TRAINING  
..

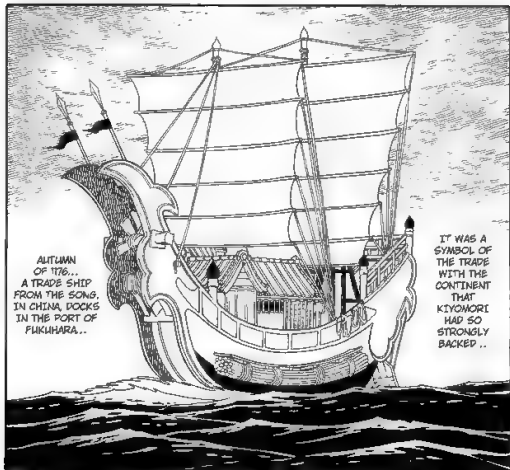
B...BUT I  
JUST CAN'T  
STAND THE  
IDEA OF  
BECOMING A  
SAMURAI..



SAMURAI  
BURNED  
DOWN MY  
FAMILY  
HOME!  
SAMURAI  
KILLED MY  
PARENTS!!

I HATE  
SAMURAI,  
AND  
ALWAYS  
WILL!



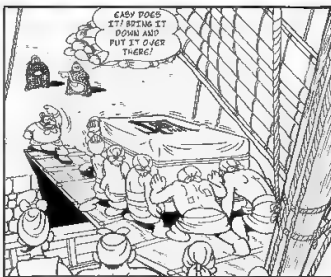


AUTUMN  
OF 1176...  
A TRADE SHIP  
FROM THE SONG,  
IN CHINA DOCKS  
IN THE PORT OF  
FUKUHARA...

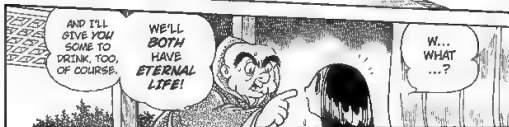
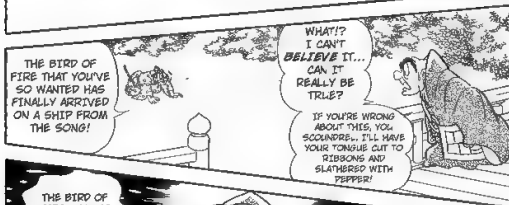
IT WAS A  
SYMBOL OF  
THE TRADE  
WITH THE  
CONTINENT  
THAT  
KIYOMORI  
HAD SO  
STRONGLY  
BACKED ..



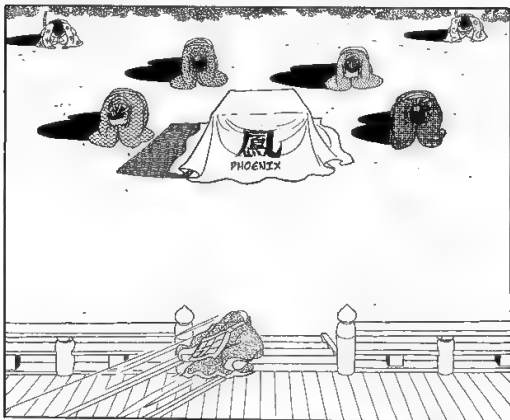
TIME TO TRANSFER  
OUR PRECIOUS  
CARGO, MEN. BUT BE  
CAREFUL. IF THE BIRD  
FLAPS AROUND TOO MUCH  
INSIDE THE CRATE,  
ITS FEATHERS'LL  
BE DAMAGED!

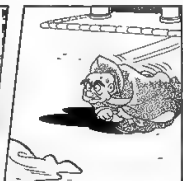
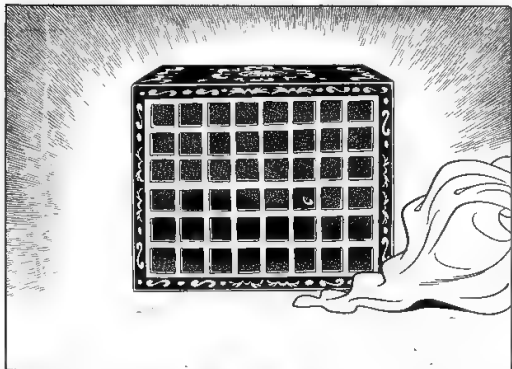


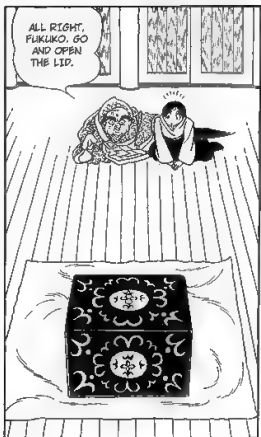
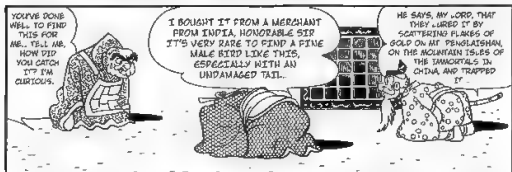
EASY DOES  
IT! BRING IT  
DOWN AND  
PUT IT OVER  
THERE!

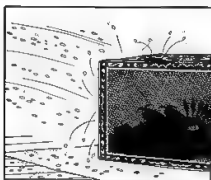


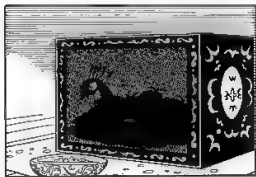
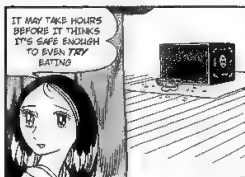
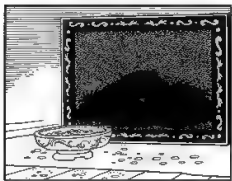


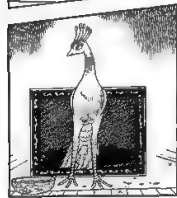
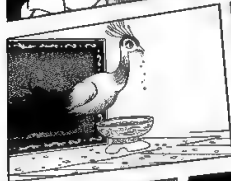
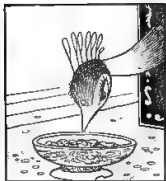
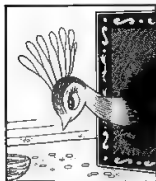


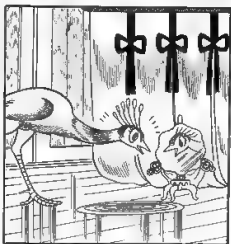
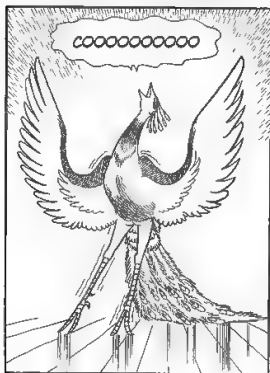
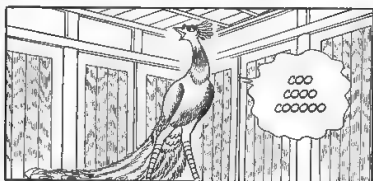
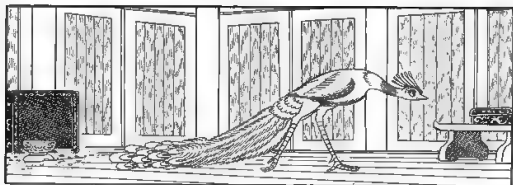


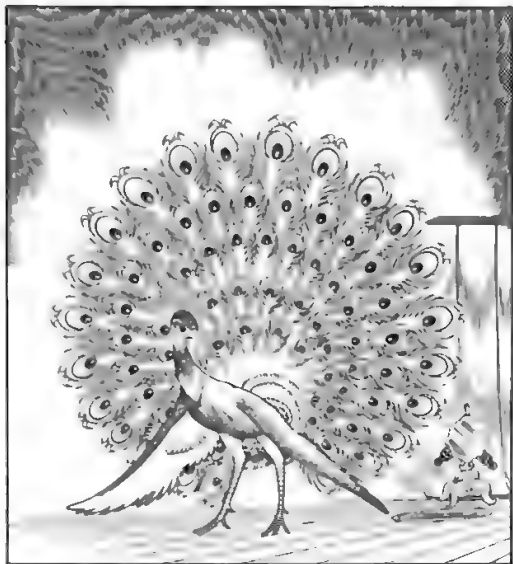




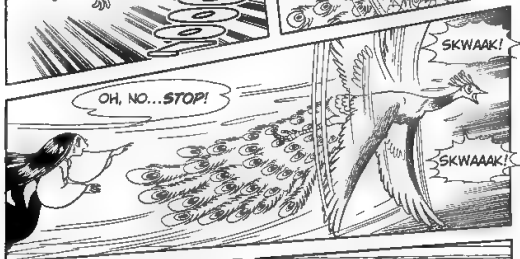
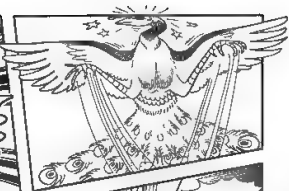






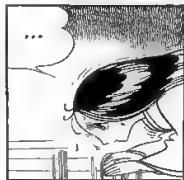


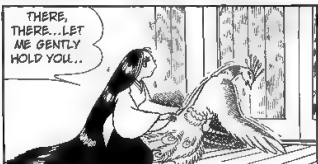
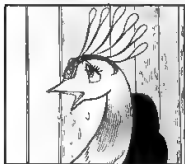






B, BUT IF.. IF THIS TRULY IS THE BIRD OF FIRE IF IF YOU HARM IT THERE MAY BE TERRIBLE CONSEQUENCES.







I WONDER IF THIS IS REALLY THE BIRD OF FIRE. . THE LEGENDARY BIRD CALLED THE PHOENIX THAT THEY SAY LIVES FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS? I WONDER IF THE STORY IS EVEN TRUE? SOMEHOW, I DOUBT IT. THIS SOFTNESS...THIS FEARFUL TREMBLING. REMINDS ME OF ALL THE TIMES I HELD WILD BIRDS AND PHEASANTS THAT BENTA USED TO BRING BACK FROM THE MOUNTAINS. I CAN'T BELIEVE THE BIRD OF FIRE WOULD FEEL SO ORDINARY...IT JUST DOESN'T SEEM RIGHT.



I EVEN WONDER IF HIS LORDSHIP TRULY BELIEVES IN THE STORY.



WHY I'LL BET YOU'RE JUST A COUSIN OF THE ORDINARY BIRDS IN THE MOUNTAINS. I'LL BET THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT YOU COME FROM A FOREIGN LAND AND HAVE PRETTIER FEATHERS. RIGHT?

YOU'RE JUST AN ORDINARY BIRD, AREN'T YOU?

I WONDER WHAT HIS  
LORDSHIP WOULD DO  
IF I TOLD HIM THIS  
IS JUST AN  
ORDINARY BIRD...?



WOULD HE KILL  
ME...? OR WOULD  
HE FALL ILL  
FROM THE  
SHOCK...?

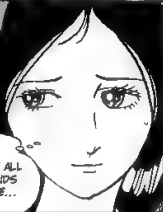
SINCE HE'S SO  
OBSESSED  
WITH THE IDEA  
OF DRINKING  
THE BLOOD  
OF THIS  
BIRD...



...HE'D  
PROBABLY **DIE**  
IF IT WERE  
TAKEN AWAY.

AND IF THAT  
HAPPENED, THE  
TAIRA CLAN  
WOULD LOSE  
ITS MOST  
VALUABLE  
MEMBER...

AND IT ALL  
DEPENDS  
ON ME...

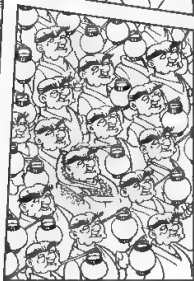
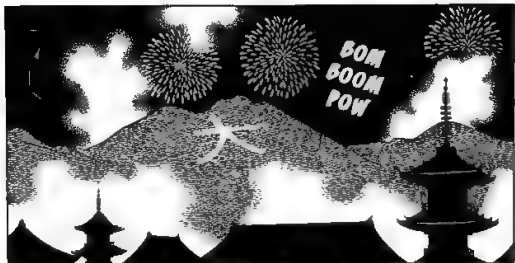






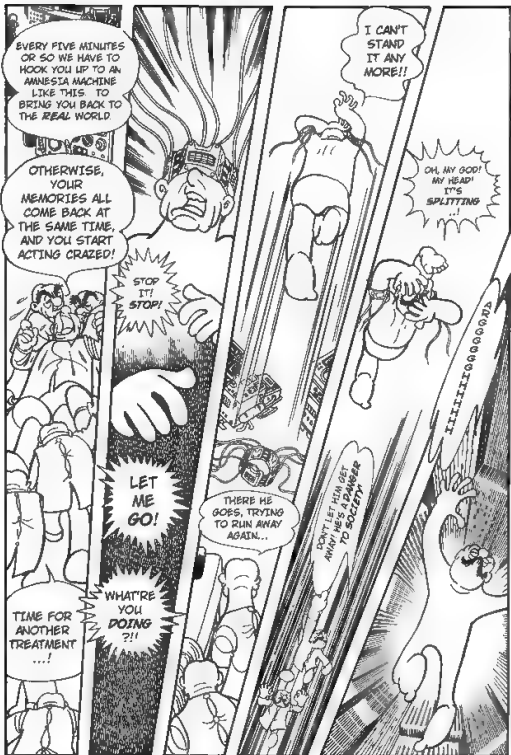


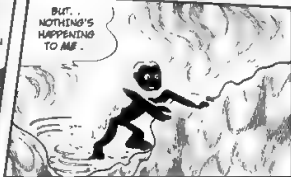


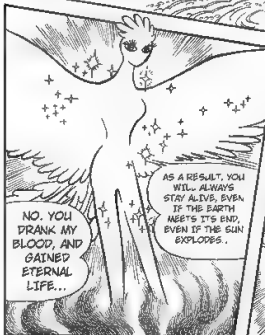












YOU WILL LIVE AS  
LONG AS THE  
UNIVERSE  
ITSELF. JUST AS  
YOU WISHED.

UNTIL  
THE END  
OF TIME. .  
TEE HEE...

YOU WILL LIVE  
ALL BY YOURSELF  
FLOATING IN THE  
VOID LIKE A  
STAR.

B...BUT HOW  
CAN THAT BE...?  
THAT'S ABSURD!

JUST GET  
IT OVER WITH!  
KILL ME!!  
PLEASE!  
KILL ME!!

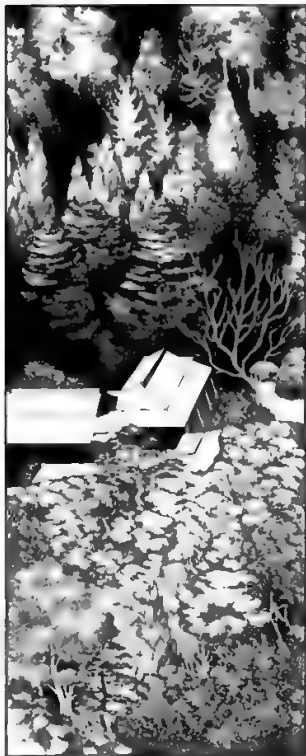
WHAT'S THE  
GOOD OF ME  
LIVING FOREVER,  
IF I'M TO BE ALL  
ALONE...?

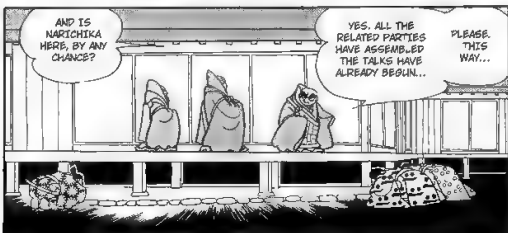
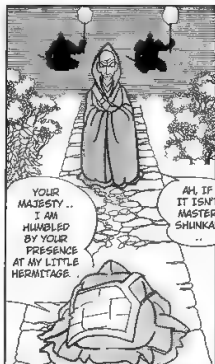
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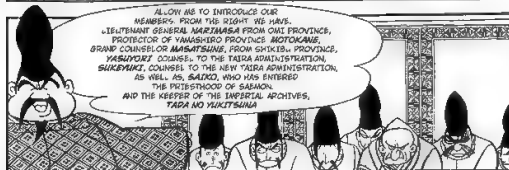
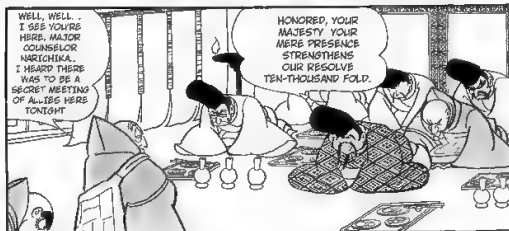
YOUR  
LORDSHIP!  
ARE YOU ALL  
RIGHT?

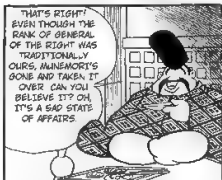
HAVE YOU HAD  
ANOTHER  
NIGHTMARE?













DOWN WITH  
THE TAIRA  
CLAN!!

LET'S CHASE  
'EM BACK  
TO HELL!



RIGHT! NOW IS THE  
TIME! WE'VE GOT THE  
FORMER EMPEROR AND  
ALL HIS ANCESTORS  
BEHIND US, SO WE  
CAN'T FAIL!!

WHAT RATIONAL  
PERSON WOULD  
SUPPORT THE  
PRESENT  
EMPEROR?  
HE'S GOT THE  
FILTHY BLOOD  
OF THE TAIRA  
RUNNING IN  
HIS VEINS...



DOWN WITH  
THE IMPOSTER  
EMPEROR!

YOU CAN  
SAY THAT  
AGAIN!



YOUR HIGHNESS,  
WE WOULD BE  
DEEPLY HONORED  
TO HEAR YOUR  
IMPRESSION..

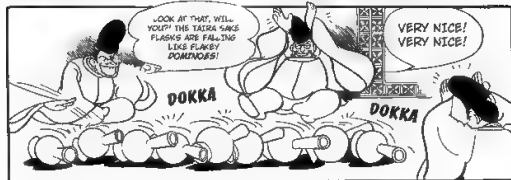
WHY, I MUST  
CONFESS  
I'M QUITE  
SUR-  
PRISED

I FRANKLY HAD  
NO IDEA THAT  
THINGS HAD  
PROGRESSSED  
SO FAR..



THERE ARE MORE TAIRA  
THAN EMPTY FLASKS OF SAKE  
AT THIS GATHERING! IT MAKES  
ME SICK TO THINK OF IT!!

THEN WHAT  
DO YOU  
PROPOSE  
WE DO?





AHH... "THE BELLS OF  
GION SHOJA TEMPLE  
ECHO THE IMPERMANENCE  
OF ALL THINGS."  
CYAWIND

MUST  
BE  
DAYIN,  
AL-  
READY



WELL,  
NOW,  
WHO  
GOES  
THERE?



IT IS I,  
MASTER  
MYOUN  
SHUNKAN.

AH, MASTER  
SHUNKAN...  
WELCOME. .  
HAD YOU COME  
THROUGH THE  
MOUNTAIN GATE,  
YOU WOULD  
HAVE PASSED  
THE MONKS  
THERE.

SO WHY  
DID YOU  
COME  
THROUGH  
THE  
BACK, ALL  
ALONE?



BUT NEVER  
MIND.  
COME IN,  
COME IN.  
I'LL GET  
DRESSED  
RIGHT AWAY.

NO,  
PLEASE,  
STAY AS  
YOU ARE.



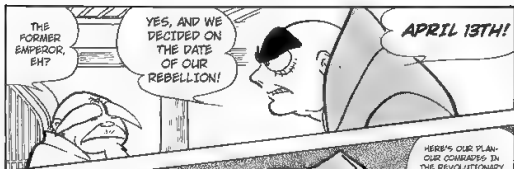
WHAT  
IS IT?



I HAVE VERY  
SOME VERY  
SENSITIVE  
INFORMATION  
FOR YOU

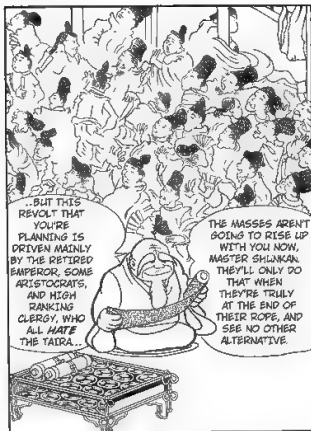
I HELD A SECRET  
MEETING AT MY  
RETREAT IN  
SHISHIGATANI  
LAST NIGHT THE  
FORMER EMPEROR  
WAS IN  
ATTENDANCE.

AH,  
THAT'S  
INTER-  
ESTING







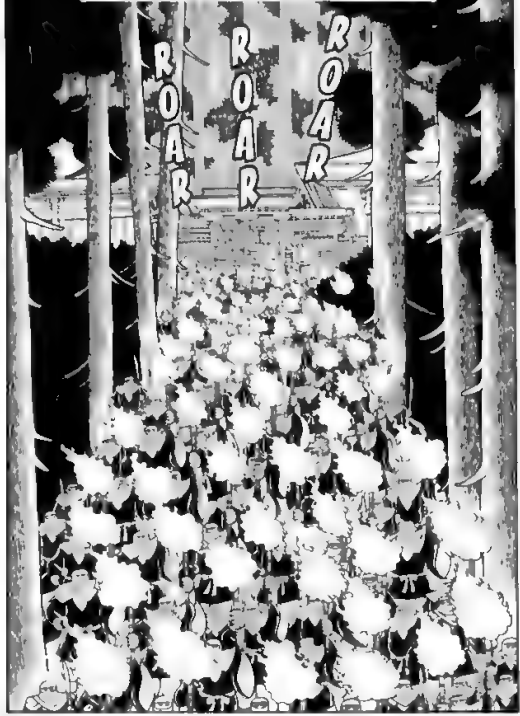


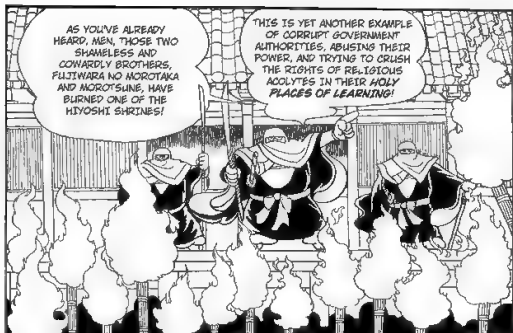


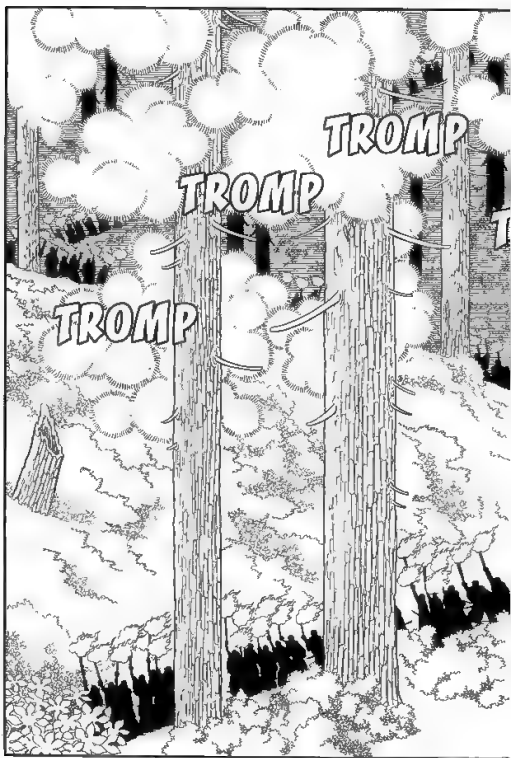
IN A TRULY ODD COINCIDENCE, THE DAY  
KIYOMORI CHOSE TO DRINK THE BIRD'S  
BLOOD WAS THE SAME DAY THAT THE  
SHISHIGATANI CONSPIRATORS HAD CHOSEN  
TO PUT HIM TO DEATH. BUT OF COURSE,  
THIS WAS ALL UNKNOWN TO KİYOMORI,  
OBU, AND THE REST OF THE TAIRA CLAN...

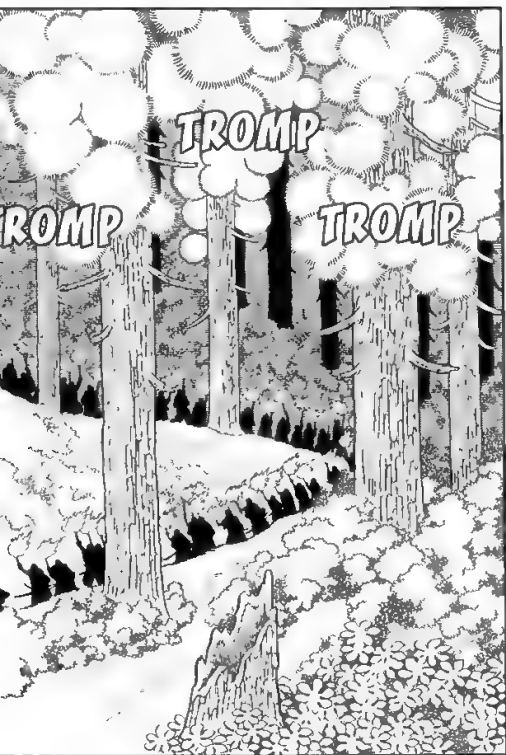


THE LAST HOURS OF APRIL 18TH, 1876 AT BARTON, TEXAS

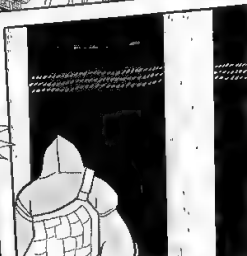
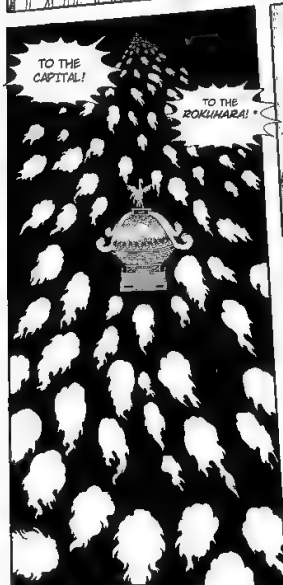














THEY SELECTED  
LEADERS, WHO  
BECAME THE  
BOSSSES  
OF THE  
FAMILIES  
OR CLANS

THEY'RE  
PROBABLY IN A  
REAL PANIC AT  
ROKUHARA...

B...BUT  
MASTER  
MYOUN...



YOU  
PROBABLY  
THINK THAT  
I'VE BEEN  
EGGING  
THEM ON,  
RIGHT?

HEH  
HEH...



WELL, I  
DON'T HAVE  
ANYTHING  
TO DO  
WITH IT.



IT'S THE  
THIRTEENTH  
OF APRIL,  
TODAY...

THE DAY THE  
SHISHIGATANI  
CROWD PLANNED  
TO STAGE THEIR  
COUP D'ETAT

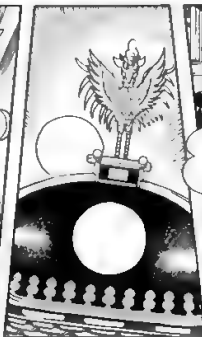
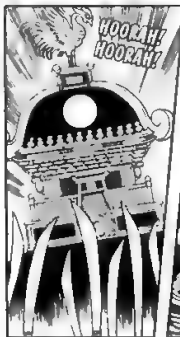
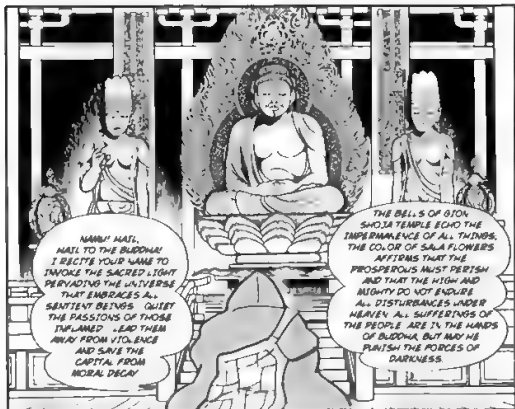
BUT THE WAY  
THINGS ARE  
GOING,  
THEY'LL NEVER  
SUCCEED...

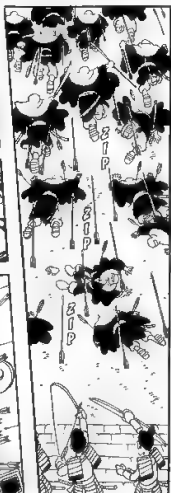
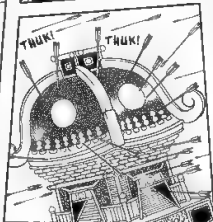
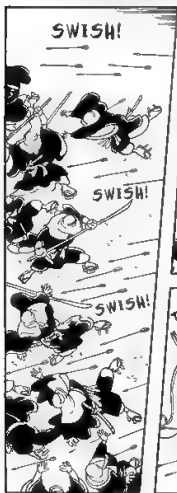
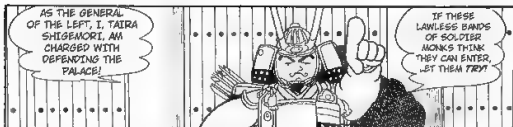


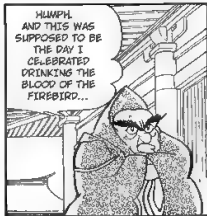
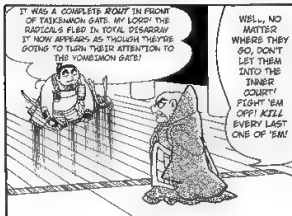
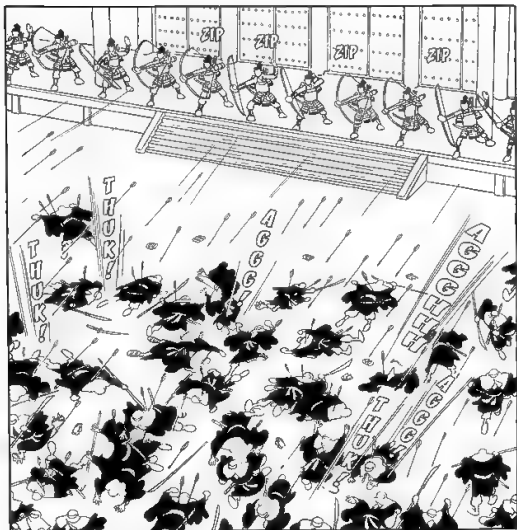
AND THAT'S  
ALL FOR  
THE  
BEST...

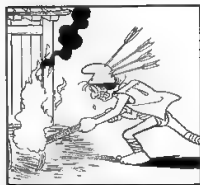
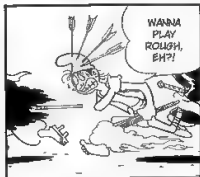
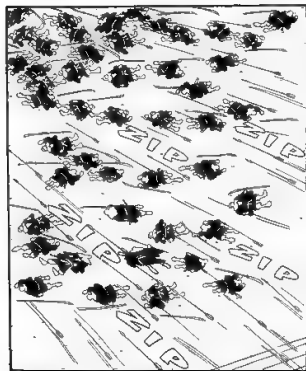
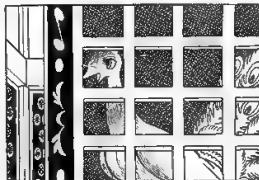


THIS IS THE  
ONLY THING  
I CAN DO TO  
STOP A  
COUP  
D'ETAT  
THAT NEVER  
HAD A  
CHANCE ..

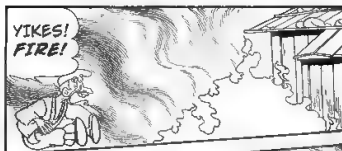


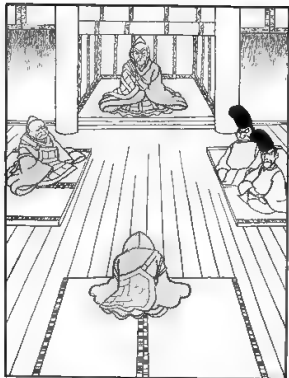




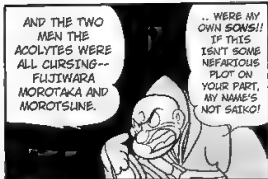


\*IN ANCIENT TIMES, RESIDENTS OF THE TEMPLES INCLUDED NOT ONLY MONKS AND SCHOLARS, BUT ALSO A NUMBER OF OUTCASTS OF SOCIETY THIEVES, ROBBERS AND THE LIKE. FOR THEM, PARTICIPATING IN THE MONKS' REBELLIONS WAS OFTEN LITTLE MORE THAN A CONVENIENT EXCUSE TO COMMIT ACTS OF LOOTING AND ARSON.











THAT'S  
RIGHT!



SO...  
BECAUSE I  
KNEW ABOUT  
THE PLAN  
FOR A COUP  
D'ETAT.

YOU WANT TO  
SILENCE ME  
BY BANISHING  
ME FROM THE  
CAPITAL, EH? HA  
WELL,  
I SUPPOSE  
THAT MAKES  
A CERTAIN  
SENSE



THAT'S  
ENOUGH,  
MYOUN!!

YOUR  
TIME IS  
UP!!



TO THINK  
THAT A  
POWERFUL  
MONK LIKE  
MASTER  
MYOUN, WHO  
SAT AT THE  
PINNACLE OF  
POWER,  
HAS HAD HIS  
MEAL TICKET  
REVOKED AND  
IS NOW BEING  
RUN OUT OF  
CAPITAL LIKE  
A COMMON  
CRIMINAL.  
IT'S SAD,  
HUH?

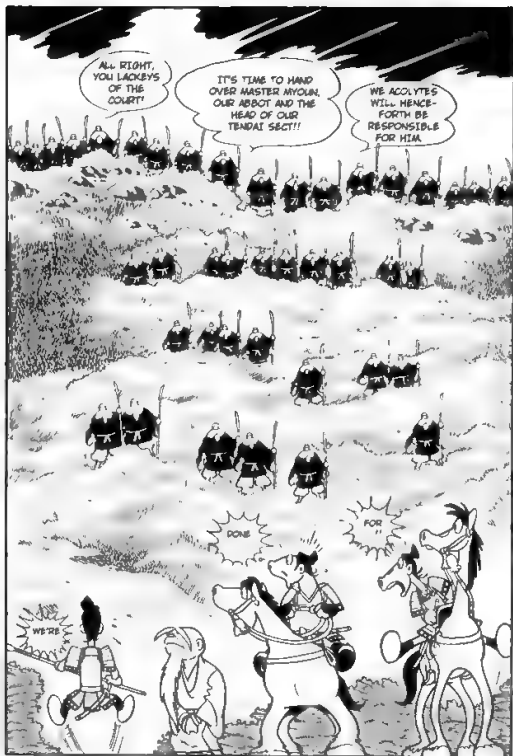


BUT CONSIDERING WHAT  
HE COULD HAVE BEEN  
CHARGED WITH, HE'S  
PROBABLY LUCKY TO  
GET OFF WITH  
BANISHMENT. IT COULD  
HAVE BEEN DEATH BY  
DROWNING OR BURNING  
AT THE STAKE

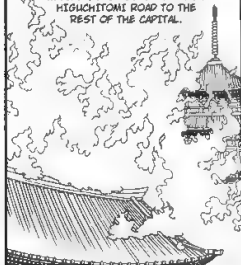


HEY...  
LOOK!

GULP  
...



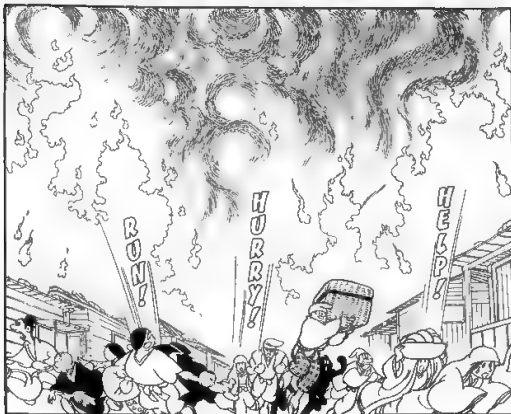
A STRONG WIND FANNED THE FLAMES THROUGH THE SOUTHEAST PORTION OF THE CAPITAL. FROM THERE, THE FIRE SPREAD QUICKLY, SPIRALING OUT FROM HIGUCHITOMI ROAD TO THE REST OF THE CAPITAL.



RUN  
FOR THE  
SUZAKU  
GATE!

**FIRE!**

IT'S NO  
USE! THE  
SUZAKU  
GATE'S  
BURNING,  
TOO!





THERE'S NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, YOUR LORDSHIP! IT'S ARSON! BUT THE FLAMES ARE SPREADING THIS WAY SO YOU ARE IN GRAVE DANGER!



BLAST IT THIS IS SHAPING UP TO BE A TERRIBLE YEAR



EVACUATE ?!

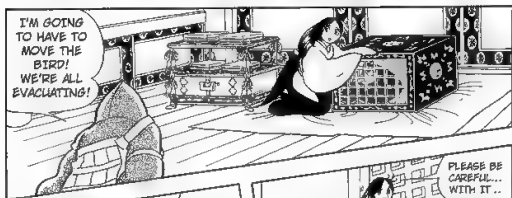
I'D BETTER CHECK ON THE BIRD...



CAN'T YOU PUT IT OUT, FOOL?!



FATHER, YOU **MUST** EVACUATE! EMBERS FROM THE FIRE ARE SPREADING TO THIS BUILDING, TOO

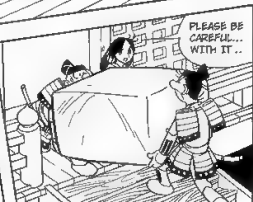


I'M GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE THE BIRD! WE'RE ALL EVACUATING!

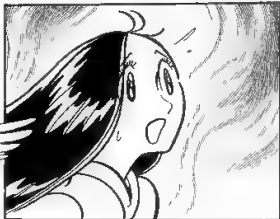
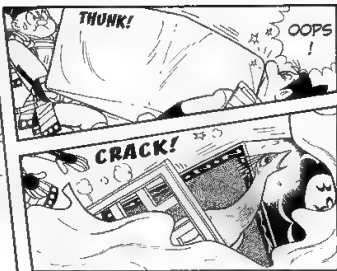


WHERE IS EVERYBODY?!

I NEED SOMEONE TO CARRY THIS BIRD!!

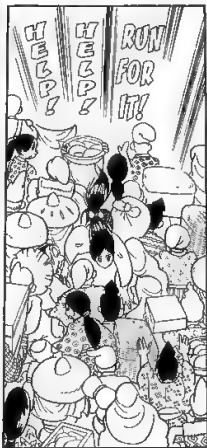
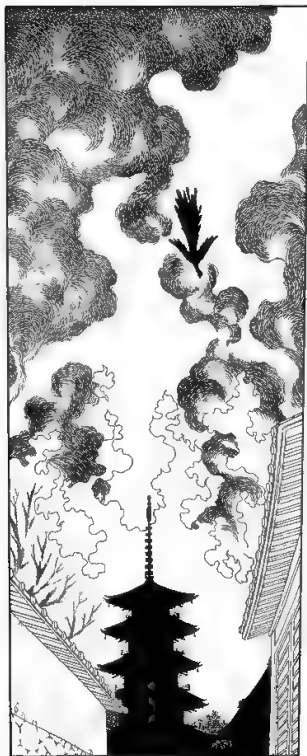


PLEASE BE CAREFUL... WITH IT...

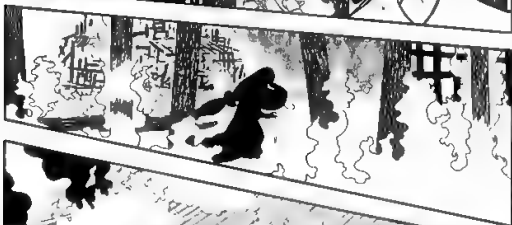


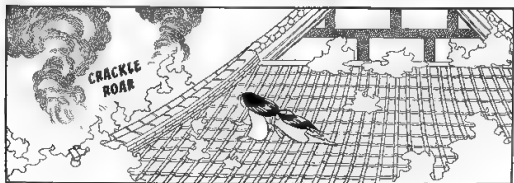
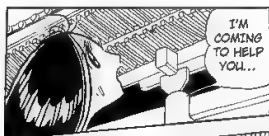
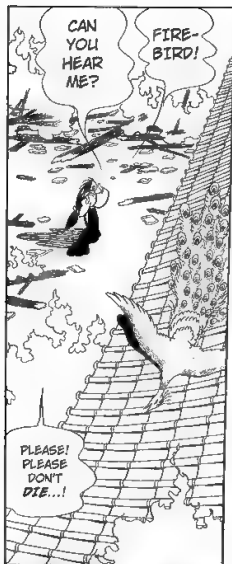


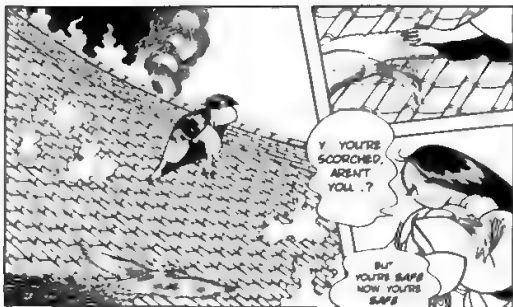
PLEASE...!  
YOU'VE  
GOT TO  
COME BACK...!  
LORD  
KIYOMORI'S  
LIFE...AND  
MY LIFE...  
DEPEND  
ON YOU!!

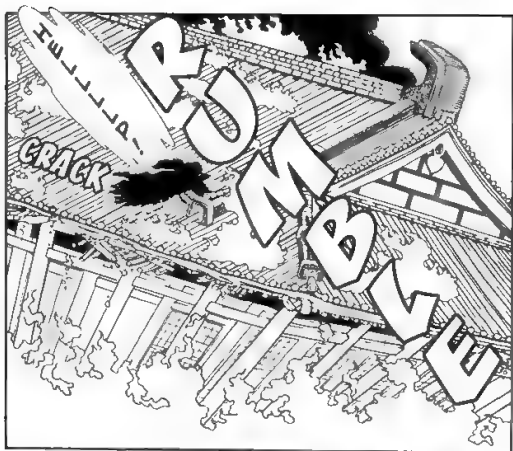
















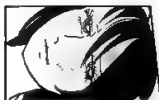
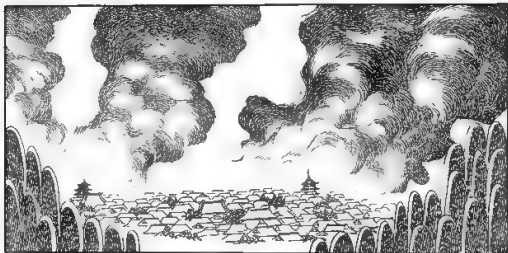
PUT HER  
IN THE BOAT..  
WE'LL TAKE  
HER BACK TO  
HEADQUARTERS..



I WISH WE  
COULDA GOT  
MORE LOOT,  
BOURD-HEAD..

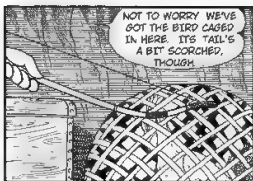
JUST  
SHADDUP  
AND KEEP  
ROWING!

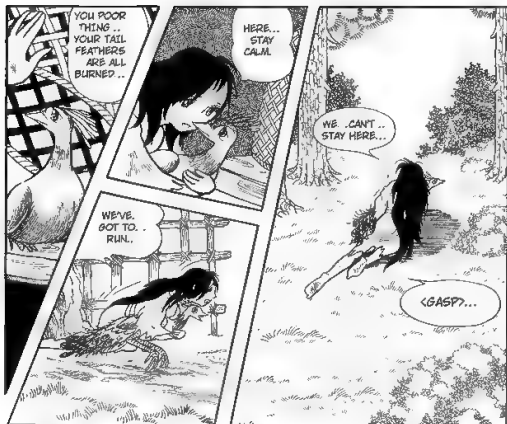
LOOK,  
WILL YA?  
THE FIRE'S  
BURNING ALL  
THE WAY  
DOWN TO THE  
RIVER!

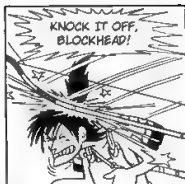




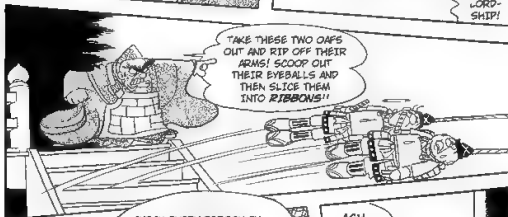


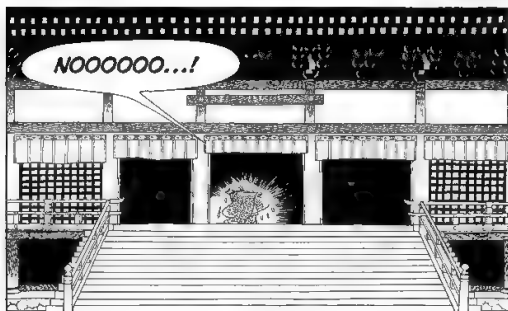


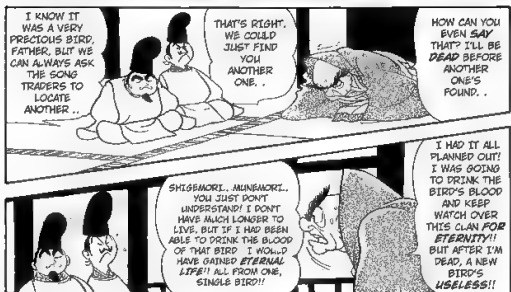
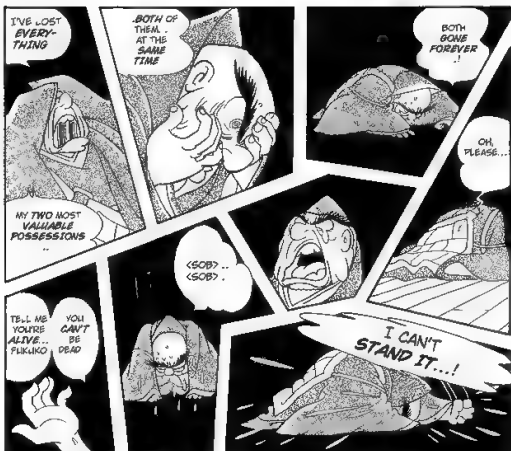


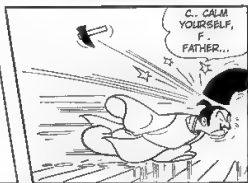
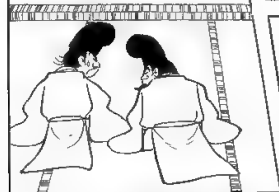
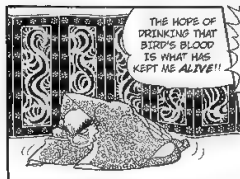




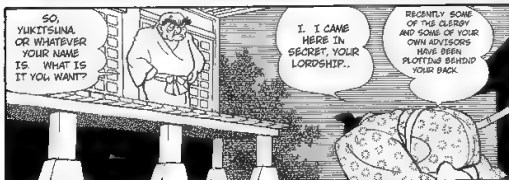












W...WELL,  
YOUR  
LORDSHIP...  
IN SHISHI-  
GATANI.

THESE  
SAME MEN  
HAVE BEEN  
PLOTING  
TO ATTACK  
YOU, AND  
DESTROY  
THE TAIRA  
CLAN!

THEY'RE  
WHAT  
!!?

GET ME  
MINEMORI  
AND  
TOMOMORI!  
CALL OUT THE  
TROOPS AND  
SURROUND  
THE  
IMPERIAL  
COURT!!

THEY'RE  
PLANNING A  
COUP D'ETAT,  
LORDSHIP.  
I WANTED TO  
TELL YOU  
THIS IN  
SECRET...

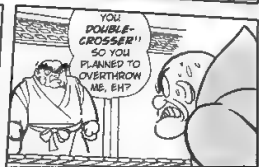
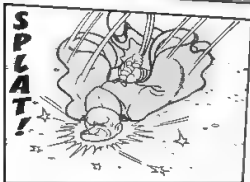
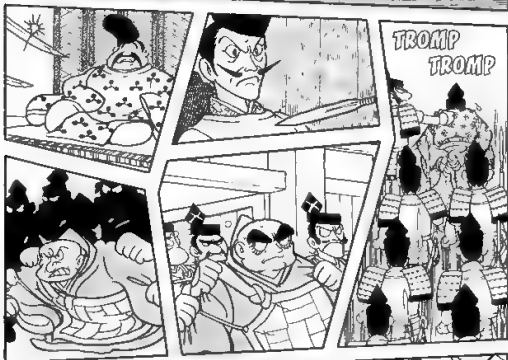
AND...AND...  
YOU THINK  
EVEN THE  
EMPEROR  
KNOWS ABOUT  
THIS??

THIS  
IS  
TREASON!

ROUND UP  
EVERY  
SINGLE  
ONE OF THE  
CONSPIR-  
ATORS AND  
ARREST  
THEM ALL!

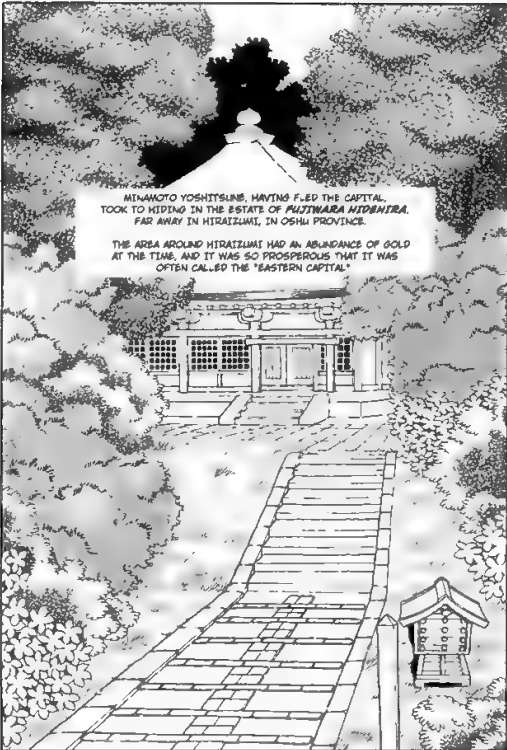
OF COURSE,  
YOUR LORDSHIP...  
HE IS ONE  
OF THE  
PLOTTERS..

HOW DARE  
ANYONE  
RAISE A HAND  
AGAINST THE  
TAIRA CLAN!!





\*A BARREN ISLAND, FAVORED FOR BANISHMENT, SOMEWHERE IN JAPAN'S SOUTHERN ARCHIPELAGO



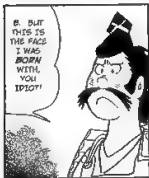
MINAMOTO YOSHITSUNE, HAVING FLED THE CAPITAL,  
TOOK TO HIDING IN THE ESTATE OF FUJIWARA HIDEHIRA,  
FAR AWAY IN HIRAZUMI, IN OSHU PROVINCE.

THE AREA AROUND HIRAZUMI HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF GOLD  
AT THE TIME, AND IT WAS SO PROSPEROUS THAT IT WAS  
OFTEN CALLED THE "EASTERN CAPITAL"

NEWS OF  
WHAT HAD  
HAPPENED  
IN THE  
CAPITAL.

FINALLY  
REACHED  
FUJIWARA  
HIDEHIRA.

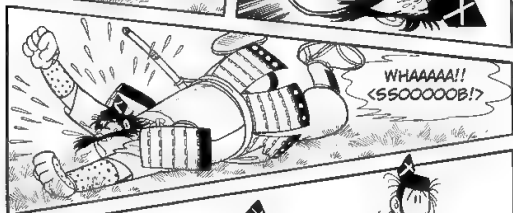
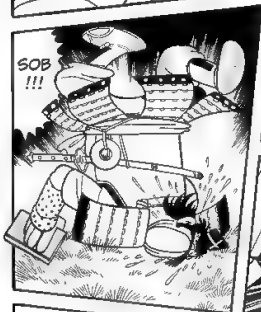












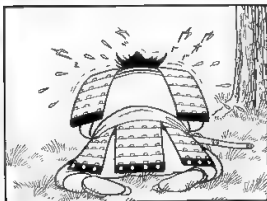
WHY?!  
WHY DID IT  
HAVE TO BE  
OBU?!!

I EVEN  
BECAME A  
**SAMURAI**  
JUST FOR  
YOU, OBU...

I WAS GONNA  
ATTACK THE  
PALACE 'N  
SAVE YOU...

BUT NOW YOU'RE  
GONE...AN' I'LL  
NEVER, EVER  
SEE YOU...

UHM...  
BOSS...



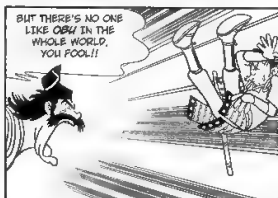
BOSS, AH DON'  
KNOW WHAT YER  
CRYIN' ABOUT,  
BUT, AH'M REALLY  
SORRY...



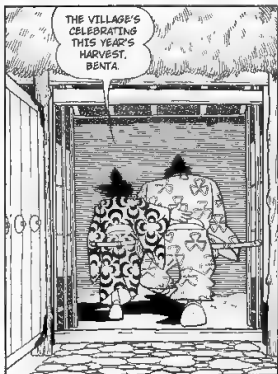
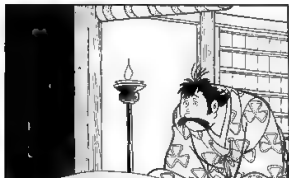
YOU GUYS'D  
NEVER  
UNDERSTAND  
HOW I FEEL!

YOU PLANN'D  
WHAT IT'S  
LIKE TO  
LOSE THE  
WOMAN YOU  
LOVE!!

SOMEONE  
I'D SWORN  
TO BE WITH  
FOR EVER!!





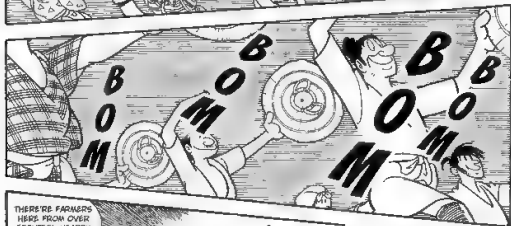
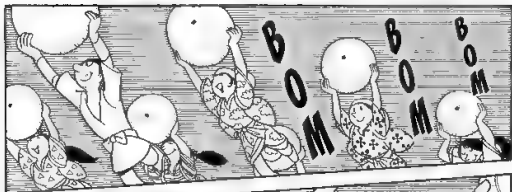




**BOM BOM BOM BOM BOM**



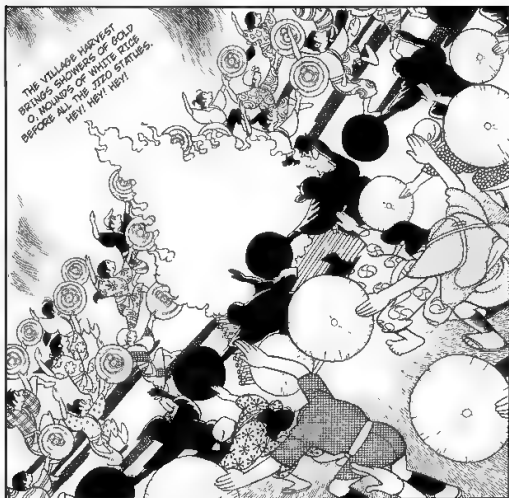




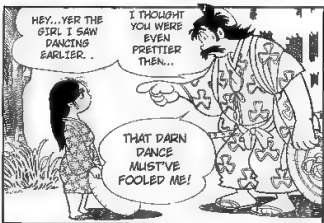
THERE'RE FARMERS  
HERE FROM OVER  
EIGHTEEN NEARBY  
VILLAGES. AND  
THEY'RE ALL PRAYING  
FOR A BOUNTIFUL  
HARVEST THIS YEAR

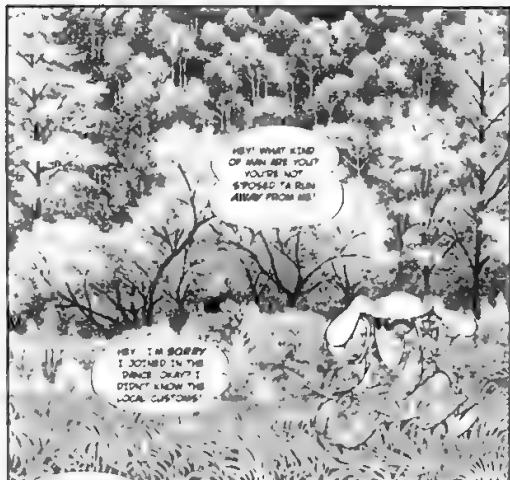












HEY, I'M SORRY  
I JOINED IN THE  
DANCE. MAYBE I  
DIDN'T KNOW THE  
LOCAL CUSTOMS!

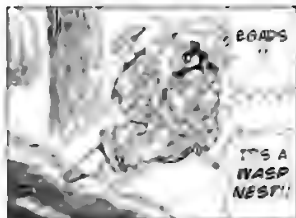
UPHEAV! LOOKS  
LIKE I'VE FINALLY  
LOST HER. BETTER  
HIDE FOR A BIT!



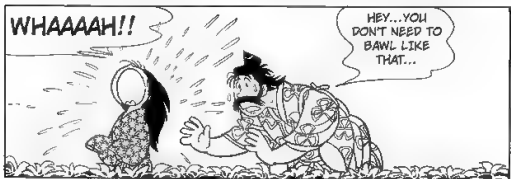
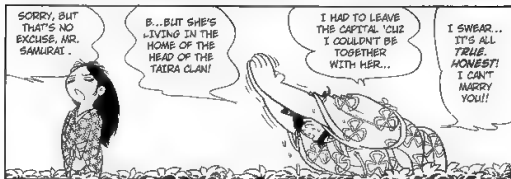
PER  
HOW  
LONG?





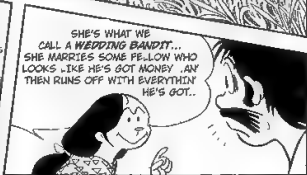


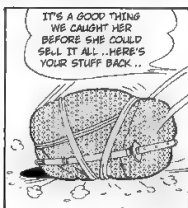
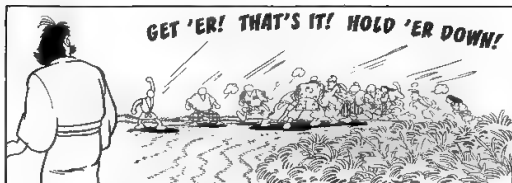


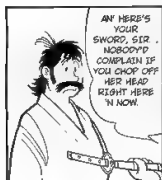


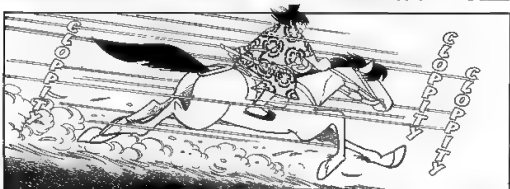


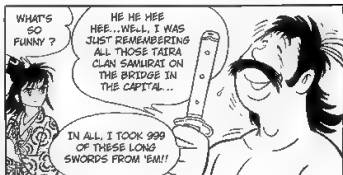
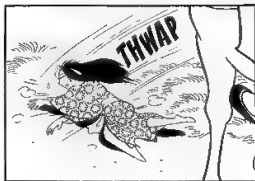




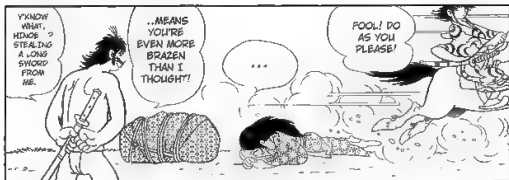


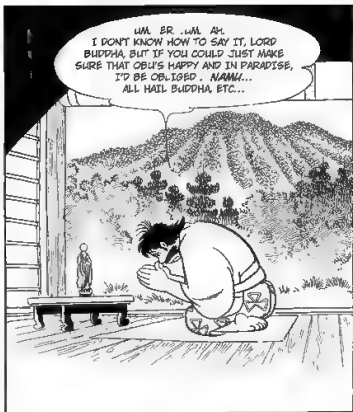












UW ER...UW AH.  
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT, LORD  
BUDDHA, BUT IF YOU COULD JUST MAKE  
SURE THAT OBU'S HAPPY AND IN PARADISE,  
I'D BE OBLIGED. NAMU...  
ALL HAIL BUDDHA, ETC...

AN' ALSO, LORD  
BUDDHA, ONE  
OTHER THING...

MY HOUSE WAS  
BURNED DOWN, MY  
PARENTS KILLED, MY  
SWEETHEART STOLEN,  
AND I HAD TO BECOME A  
SAMURAI EVEN THOUGH  
I DIDN'T WANT TO,  
SO I'M KIND OF  
AT A LOSS WHAT  
TO DO.

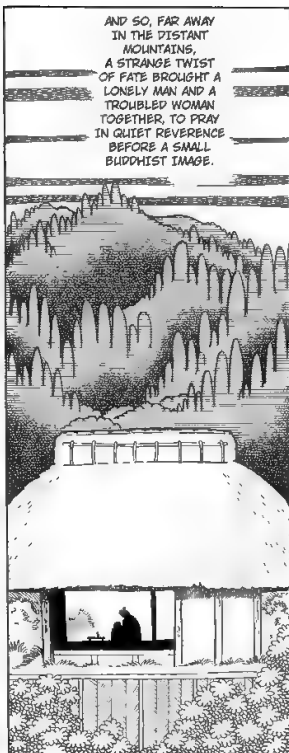
SO IF YOU  
COULD SWING  
A LITTLE GOOD  
LUCK MY WAY,  
I'D REALLY  
APPRECIATE  
IT.

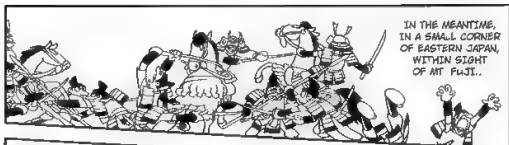


WHAT  
THE?



HEY! IT'S  
HINOE!!





IN THE MEANTIME,  
IN A SMALL CORNER  
OF EASTERN JAPAN,  
WITHIN SIGHT  
OF MT FUJI..



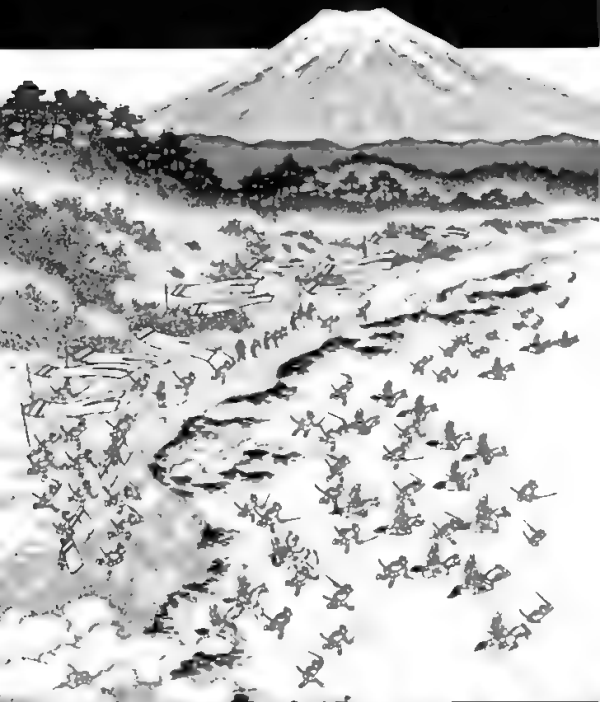
...A YOUNG  
LEADER WHO  
REPRESENTED  
THE HOPES  
OF THE  
MINAMOTO  
CLAN.

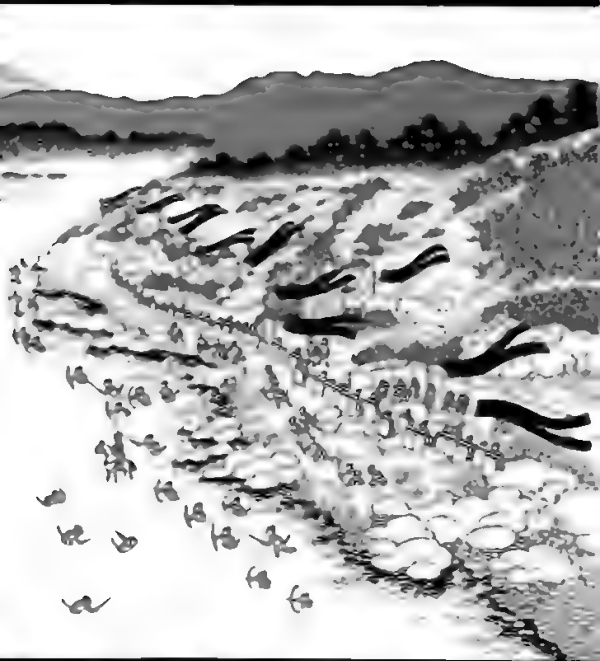


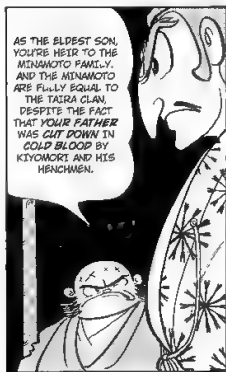
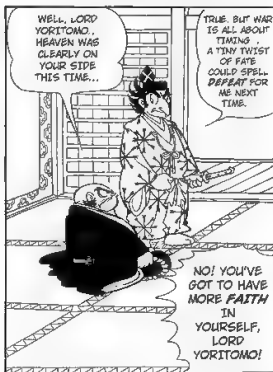
...WAS ABOUT  
TO RE-WRITE  
HISTORY.

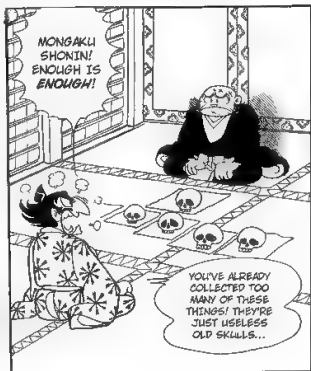


HIS NAME WAS  
MINAMOTO NO  
YORITOMO.

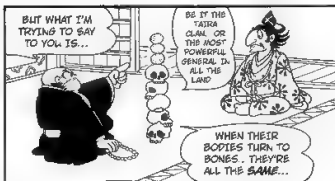
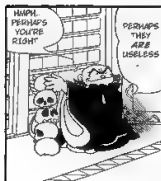












MEANWHILE,  
BACK AT THE  
CAPITAL, TAIRA  
NO KIYOMORI, THE  
LAST HOPE OF THE  
TAIRA FAMILY,  
SUDDENLY TOOK  
ILL...

AND, WHILE  
ALWAYS UNSTABLE,  
HE NOW VERGED  
ON ABSOLUTE  
MADNESS...

HE FELL  
INTO A STATE  
OF DEEP  
DESPAIR...

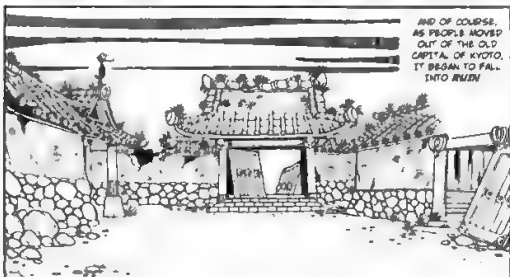
HE  
IMPRISONED  
THE  
EMPEROR  
IN THE  
TOBA  
PALACE.

..AND SET  
FIRES  
THROUGHOUT  
NARA CITY

**WALK**



FUKUHARA, NEAR THE PRESENT  
DAY PORT OF KOBE WAS ON A  
NARROW STRIP OF LAND  
BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND  
THE SEA AS A RESULT THERE  
WAS ONLY ROOM TO BUILD A  
VERY SMALL CITY EVEN IF  
KIYOMORI HAD SUCCEEDED IN  
MOVING THE WHOLE CAPITAL  
THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN  
VERY LITTLE ROOM FOR  
ANYONE TO LIVE



AND OF COURSE,  
AS PEOPLE MOVED  
OUT OF THE OLD  
CAPITAL OF KYOTO,  
IT BEGAN TO FALL  
INTO RUIN

NOT SURPRISINGLY PERHAPS,  
IN A SCANT FIVE MONTHS  
KIYOMORI DECIDED TO MOVE  
THE CAPITAL BACK TO KYOTO  
THE POOR EXHAUSTED PEOPLE  
WERE ONCE MORE UPROOTED  
AND FORCED TO RELOCATE.

WHAT COULD  
POSSIBLY  
HAVE CAUSED  
SO MUCH  
TROUBLE IN  
THIS MAN'S  
HEART?



NO ONE  
EVER  
KNEW FOR  
CERTAIN



HOWEVER, ONE  
PERSON IS SAID TO  
HAVE OVERHEARD  
SOMETHING  
KIYOMORI MUMBLED,  
AS HE GAZED OVER  
THE SEA ON A DARK  
NIGHT IN SUMA.





OH, BIRD  
OF FIRE...  
GIVE ME  
LIFE!

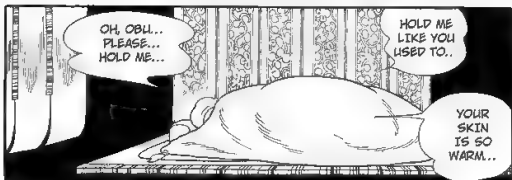
PLEASE  
FLY FROM  
INDIA TO  
ME AGAIN!

LET ME  
DRINK YOUR  
BLOOD! LET  
ME LIVE!!

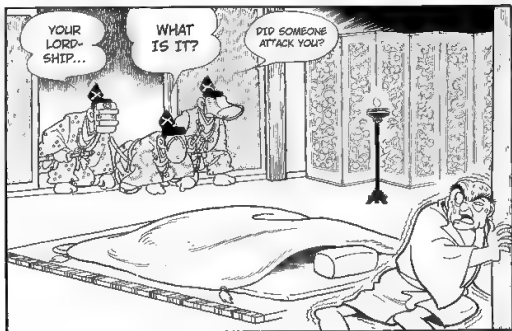
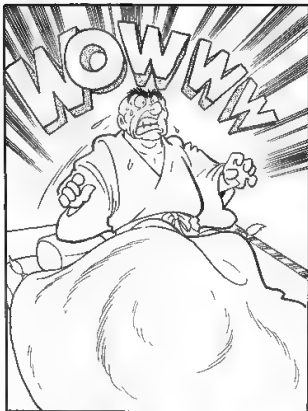
<GASP>...  
<COUGH>...  
<HACK>...  
OH. BIRD...  
OF...  
FIRE...

KIYOMORI MAY HAVE  
THOUGHT THAT BY  
MOVING THE CAPITAL  
TO FUKUHARA, HE  
WOULD BE THAT MUCH  
CLOSER TO THE SONG  
IN CHINA  
AND THEREBY  
INCREASE HIS  
CHANCES OF  
OBTAINING  
ANOTHER BIRD ..

HE WAS,  
AFTER ALL,  
AWARE THAT  
HE DID NOT  
HAVE MUCH  
LONGER TO  
LIVE...













.. AND THOSE  
THAT GO TO  
HELL.. WILL  
SUFFER FOR  
ETERNITY.

B...BUT...  
IS IT  
TRUE?

EXACTLY  
WHAT ARE  
YOU TRYING  
TO SAY,  
LORD  
KIYONORI  
...?

DONT  
LAUGH,  
MYOUN.

WELL...  
I WANT TO BE  
RE-BORN,  
MASTER  
MYOUN.

I'M  
SERIOUS  
ABOUT  
THIS...

I KNOW THAT  
I'VE DONE  
TERRIBLE  
THINGS...  
AND THAT I  
DESERVE TO GO  
TO HELL..

WELL, BOTH  
HEAVEN AND A  
HELL ARE HERE  
ON THIS  
EARTH...

FOR EXAMPLE,  
IT IS TRUE THAT  
YOUR LORDSHIP  
BURNED AND  
RAZED TEMPLES  
AND SHRINES  
IN THE CITY  
OF NARA...

BUT I'D  
LIKE JUST  
ONE MORE  
CHANCE TO  
COME  
BACK  
AS A  
HUMAN.

IF YOU ARE  
SUFFERING  
FROM GUILT  
BECAUSE OF  
IT, THEN YOU  
ARE NOW IN  
HELL...

WHEN PEOPLE  
DIE, THEY ARE  
MOST LIKELY  
REINCARNATED

BUT  
THERE ARE  
NO WITNESSES  
TO THIS  
AND EVEN  
THOSE BEING  
REINCARNATED  
ARE PROBABLY  
NOT EVEN  
AWARE OF  
WHAT HAS  
HAPPENED



YOU MAY  
LEAVE  
NOW  
MASTER  
MYOUN

AM THE ODDS  
OF THAT ARE EVEN  
SMALLER THAN OF  
WINNING THE  
GRAND PRIZE IN  
THE LOTTERY  
THERE'S NO  
GUARANTEE AFTER  
ALL THAT YOU'LL  
EVEN COME BACK  
AS A HUMAN

SO WHAT  
ARE MY  
CHANCES  
OF COMING  
BACK AS A  
DESCENDANT  
OF THE  
TAIRA?

YOU  
MIGHT BE  
REINCARNATED  
AS A LITTLE  
WORM

OR  
MAYBE A  
FISH ..

WELL, IF I CAN'T COME  
BACK AS A HUMAN..  
I'D SETTLE FOR A BIRD!  
I'D SEARCH THE SKIES  
UNTIL I FIND THE BIRD  
OF FIRE AND THEN I'D  
TELL IT: "O LOVELY BIRD,  
PLEASE SHARE YOUR  
BLOOD WITH THE  
TAIRA CLAN."

FEBRUARY 27, 1181

WHAT? YOU  
SAY THAT THE  
SAHURAI OF  
SHIKOKU  
ISLAND HAVE  
SIDED WITH  
THE MINAMOTO  
CLAN?!

THIS IS THE FINAL  
STRAW! AS THE  
GENERAL OF THE  
RIGHT, I SHALL LEAD  
A GRAND ARMY TO  
ATTACK THEM!

W...WAIT!  
STOP! YOU  
CAN'T DO  
THAT!!

WHAT IF  
SOMETHING  
SHOULD  
HAPPEN  
TO YOU!?

LEAVE IT  
TO YOUR  
SUBORDINATES!  
DON'T GO! STAY  
HERE IN THE  
CAPITAL!  
PLEASE!

AH, BUT I CAN'T  
DO THAT, MY  
DEAR, I HAVE  
TO THINK  
ABOUT  
SAVING  
FACE

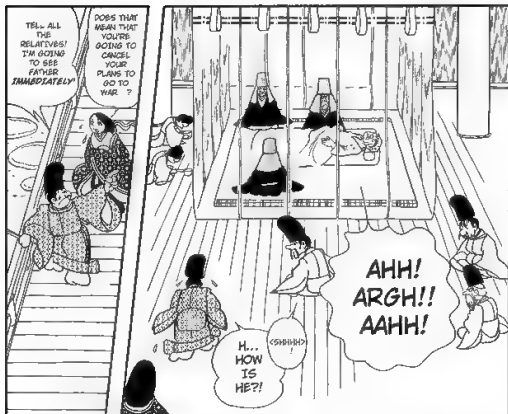
PLEEEASE!  
IT'S ALL  
I ASK.

ALL RIGHT,  
THEN THEN  
JUST GIVE ME  
MY ALLOWANCE.  
I WANT A  
HUNDRED  
THOUSAND  
A MONTH!

I HAVE  
AN  
URGENT  
REPORT,  
MY  
LORD..

YOUR  
FATHER, LORD  
KIYOMORI, IS  
DETERIORATING  
RAPIDLY .HE HAS  
BEEN SEIZED BY  
A TERRIBLE  
FEVER.

WHAT?!



AS PRIME  
MINISTER  
KIYOMORI  
NEARED  
DEATH, IT IS  
SAID THAT  
HIS BODY  
RADIATED SO  
MUCH HEAT  
THAT NO ONE  
COULD STAND  
TO BE  
WITHIN  
THIRTY FEET  
OF HIM.



TO BE CONTINUED IN PHOENIX  
VOLUME 8





# ABOUT THIS EDITION OF PHOENIX: **CIVIL WAR: PART 1**

The 12 self-contained yet interlinked stories that compose *Phoenix* (*Hi no tori* in Japanese, literally "Firebird") is considered by many to be the summit of Osamu Tezuka's artistic achievement. Tezuka himself referred to *Phoenix* as his "life work." Painstakingly composed over a span of decades (initial versions appeared as early as 1954), serialized in a number of venues, and left incomplete with Tezuka's death in 1989, *Phoenix* represents Tezuka's ambitious attempt to push all he knew about the comics medium to address fundamental questions about existence.

All 12 stories in *Phoenix* are linked by the presence of the mythical bird, an immortal guardian of the universal lifeforce. Read in order, the separate stories jump across time, alternating between a distant future and a distant past, converging on the present, with characters from one story being reincarnated in another. The existing twelve stories, totaling over three thousand pages of work, are subtitled "Dawn," "Future," "Yamato," "Space," "Karma," "Resurrection," "Robe of Feathers," "Nostalgia," "Civil War," "Life," "Strange Beings," and "Sun."

This edition, *Phoenix: Civil War: Part 1*, is an English translation of the eighth of the 12 *Phoenix* stories: A 27-page excerpt from Dadakari's translation of "Karma," which was printed in Frederik L. Schodt's *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics*. "*Phoenix: Civil War: Part 1*" was first serialized in 1978-80 in *Manga Shōjo* Magazine.

# A Journey through Time and Space: An Overview of the Complete *Phoenix* Saga

The complete *Phoenix* is a story about a man who takes on a historical narrative structure unlike anything that has come before it. The story is set in a time when the world was a different place, and the people were different. The story is a journey through time and space, and it is a journey that is worth taking.

## Dawn (1967) 240-270 A.D.

The era of Queen Himiko of the Yamatai Koku. The work quotes from the accounts of the *Gishwa-jinden*. Also uses accounts from the legend of *Iwano Tesser*.



The scene in the Amagoi river myth where Himiko

compares herself to Amaterasu-Omikami and a solar eclipse occurs.

## Yamato (1968-69) 320-350 A.D.

Based on the legend of Yamato takeru-no-mikoto. The dates above were inferred from the account of Old Man Takemi, and from information in *Dawn*.



Designated as a woman, Prince Yamato Ogyu approaches the Queen of the Kurose and states him. As told in the *Kiki* myth, the prince gets the name Taisora from his opponent right before he dies.

## Karma (Hou-ou) (1969-70) 720-752 A.D.

The complicated drama of the spirit of two Buddhist sculptors. Set in the Nara Period, 710-794, during the national enterprise of the construction of the Great Buddha. Here the Hou-ou, a Chinese myth is the Phoenix.



Konomaru, who has been ordered by the authorities to be in charge of the construction and design of the Great Buddha, is shocked when the statue starts to move. The workers become frightened and the bizarre phenomenon halts construction.

## Robe of Feathers (1971) 937-941 A.D.



The spirit of a fisherman is bewitched by the beauty of the woman and he hides her clothes.

A sci-fi version of the Hasegawa legend of Mito no Matsudaira in Enchu (modern day Shizuoka). Set during Taira no Masakado's rebellion which occurred during the Heian Period (898-1185).

The spirit of a woman swimming in the ocean is captured by the beauty of the white sand and green pine.

## Civil War (1978-80) 1172-1189 A.D.

The time of the Genpei Kassen War between the Taira and the Genji after the fall of the Heishi (Taira Clans). Using the *Heike Monogatari* and *Gakureki* as a backdrop, this story depicts "combat" as the fate of living things.



Kono Yoshinaka defeats the Heishi and takes control of the capital. He cuts down the famous monk Myōtō. He came to the capital because he is after the Phoenix.

## Strange Beings (1981) 1468-1498 A.D.

The Sengoku Period, 482-558: Sakonnohime, the heir of General Iga renzai, cuts down the nut. Kōbōkum, who seems to be 800 years old. But she doesn't realize the true relationship between herself and the nut.

The banner bearer is saying that "now" is the beginning of the Sengoku War and they are in the middle of the Ōnin Rebellion. In other words, they are in a time before Sakonnohime was born.



## Sun (1986-88) 663-672 A.D.

The story begins after the defeat of the Japan-Kudara alliance at Hakusokō and Japan's withdrawal from the Korean peninsula, and ends with the struggle for the imperial throne during the Jinshin Rebellion.



Emperor Kōbun, formerly called Oshiro no Miko, is the cousin of Tōshichi no Miko, who is the son of Oshiro no Miko.

## Future (1967-68) 3404 A.D.-Infinity

The end of the future. Mankind is in decline and has become very conservative. The earth is run down and faces devastation. Eventually a nuclear war breaks out causing the end of everything.

The Yamato Central Main Building Megalopolis. Yamato is one of the five remaining underground cities of mankind.



## Universe (1969) 2577 A.D.

In Orion, a sub-light speed rocket heading towards Earth crashes into a meteorite. The ship becomes unable to fly and four people manage to escape, including Saruta and Nana.

Each of the passengers escapes in an individual escape pod. However, the pods only have enough food for half a year and enough air for a year and a half. Possibilities of survival are...



## Resurrection (1970-71) 2482-3344 A.D.

In the year 3344, Prof. Saruta lands on the moon. He meets and acquires Robita in his final form. Spanning 860 years, the end of this episode goes beyond *Universe* and close to the beginning of *Future*.

Robita and this rocket also make appearances in *Future*, where Robita stops Reck and then gets shot by him.



## Nostalgia (1976-78) Indeterminate (approx. 25th century)

A Japanese woman named Romy establishes a civilization and history for the formerly uninhabited planet, Eden-17. Her husband dies an unnatural death, but the life she carries inside her...



The spaceship is headed for Eden-17. The shiny object in the foreground is its sun. The planet is surrounded by a revolving ring of space dust held there by gravity.

## Life (1980) 2155-2170 A.D.

Human clones are being created, all for high ratings and a public-killing TV game show called *Clone Man Hunt*.

Animal clones were created for food. Human clones are created for a TV show—the cloning company president speaks as a sponsor. A terrifying plan for a TV show!



## Sun (1986-88) 2008 A.D.

The "Light Tribe" acquires the Phoenix in space. However, they turn it into an icon and come to control society through religion. Non-believers are called "shadows" and are chased out to live underground.

The head temple of the "Light Tribe." A young shadow boy named Suguru endeavors to climb the great tower and steal the Phoenix.



# AFTERWORD

By Takayuki Matsutani

*"Tezuka-sensei came to Earth from a distant universe, and when his mission here was accomplished, he returned to outer space..."* This notion was expressed several times in the tremendous flood of condolences given by intellectuals, artists, and others active in the fields of manga, film, music, and publishing when Osamu Tezuka passed away thirteen years ago. At the time, my grief over his death was so fresh I dismissed the idea as mere science-fiction fancy. Later, however, as I began sorting through Osamu Tezuka's legacy, I truly came to believe "Tezuka was a space alien"—it was the only adequate way of explaining his extraordinary artistry.

Look at *Phoenix*. I won't go into an analysis of the story; rather, I will just point out that it is one of many manga series he created, that during his career of forty-odd years Tezuka drew 150,000 pages like those you see here. Simple arithmetic shows this comes out to ten pages a day—without a single day off! That's not all: Tezuka also produced over sixty animation titles (and *Astro Boy*, for instance, a TV series with two hundred episodes, is counted here as just one title!). Add to this over thirty books of prose, frequent television and radio appearances, lectures, interviews, and travels, not to mention stints as producer or director at various expos and other events....It seems impossible that one person could have done it all, yet Tezuka did. Moreover, he did it all himself, virtually without any help. Then consider the breadth of subjects and genres he tackled: historical works, contemporary issues, science fiction, politics, culture, education, character-based drama, epics, short stories, picture books for toddlers, mysteries, psychodramas, fantasy, nonsense, satire, and stories for boys, girls, young adults, and mature readers...in other words, everything under the sun.

It is extremely unfortunate that Tezuka did not live to see the 21st century, where so many of his stories are set.

In 2001, Japan entered an unprecedented economic recession, while the U.S. was assaulted on September 11 by terrorist attacks that far surpassed our wildest imaginings. These attacks then triggered the retaliatory war in Afghanistan, while in the Middle East the Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalated to new heights of violence. The 21st century has gotten off to a horrific start, and now in 2002, the countdown to Armageddon seems only to have accelerated. As globalization moves forward, the world is getting smaller and smaller. If Tezuka were alive today, how would he feel about all this? What kind of message would he send out to children through his works? Sadly, this is something we cannot know.

Although this *Future* takes place far beyond our time, in the third millennium A.D., Tezuka set *Astro Boy's* birthday in the opening years of the 21st century—April 7, 2003, to be exact—only fifty years ahead of the time *Astro Boy* began serialization in 1952. Just seven years after the devastation of World War II, when Japan was still a poor, scrabbling country, Tezuka imagined high-rises and underground cities, expressways snaking between skyscrapers, TV phones, trips to the moon, masses of industrial robots, and even a revolt by robots. Many of these things now actually exist in today's world, lending proof to Tezuka's astounding visionary powers. But even more extraordinary to my mind is the fact that, at a time when Japanese cities were still in ruins, when the Japanese people were living day-to-day and hand-to-mouth, and as such put economic recovery above all else, Tezuka—in such works as *Jungle Taitei* (which began serialization in 1950) and *Astro Boy*—was addressing environmental issues, calling for coexistence between human beings and other animals, and reminding us to take care of our precious planet Earth. These themes, which also dominate the *Phoenix* series, are the most pressing and relevant issues facing humanity today. That Tezuka's imagination could reach so far amidst the reality of 1950s Japan is the mark of genius.

Tezuka continued working up to three weeks before his death. As his strength waned, and he became too weak even to sit up in bed, he would still struggle with all his might to rise.

"I'm begging you, let me work!" were his final words. His wife desperately tried to calm him down, but Tezuka had

always been a workaholic, a man who worked without rest. What made Tezuka so compulsively creative, so urgently obsessive about his work?

Tezuka experienced World War II as a teenager. He spoke of having seen entire neighborhoods turned into a sea of flames by bombs and charred corpses lying on the streets afterwards. He remembered the deeply comforting sight of lights shining brightly in people's homes the night of August 15, 1945—the first night of peace. The war was finally over, the blackouts a thing of the past, and he savored the return of peace with profound gratitude. But at the same time, he swore to himself never to forget the tragic consequences of war, and to pass on his own experiences of war to the children of the future.

The next year, 1946, Tezuka was studying medicine at Osaka University and also made his debut as a professional manga artist. Although he did brilliant manga work and met with success, Tezuka finished his studies as well and obtained a physician's license. Medicine was, then as now, a highly respected and economically stable profession. In contrast, children's manga were dismissed as cheap entertainment; moreover, only a handful of people could make a living from drawing them. Even so, and in spite of the social conditions of the time, Tezuka chose manga over medicine.

Of course he loved drawing manga, probably loved it more than anything else. But I believe he was driven by something more than that: he chose manga because he felt it was his mission to spread the message of peace and respect for life to the children of the future. And Tezuka probably knew, better than anyone else, that he had staked his future on an amazing medium. Today, computer-enhanced Hollywood movies are taking the world by storm. With computer graphics, people can morph easily into different shapes and interact in the same frame with dinosaurs. Some say that manga and animation have lost their advantages and been surpassed. But for those of us who have read Tezuka's works, Hollywood has only now caught up, just barely, with the expressive capacity of manga. Over fifty years ago, Tezuka knew that manga—back then an art form still in its infancy—could express anything and everything the imagination could conjure, from the mundane to the utterly fantastic.

However, and this is probably the same all over the world, manga has always been viewed as inferior to other art forms, such as painting, prose, music, and theater. Manga was denounced by adults, who claimed it had a bad influence on children. Tezuka battled against the censure of these adults all his life, and this fight for acceptance was another driving force in his passion for work.

Some years ago, Japanese newspapers reported an incident in which children were told to bring all their manga books to school so they could throw them into a big bonfire in the yard. Yes, recent book-burnings in Japan focused on manga. I don't claim that all manga are good. As with any other art form, there is good work and bad work. But Tezuka, conscious of the average adult's bias toward manga, worked indefatigably to change that bias. Most important, of course, he created high-quality manga, but he also appeared frequently on TV, wrote essays and articles for magazines and newspapers, and did everything else he could in his crusade to bring manga the recognition it deserved as a legitimate art form.

In the year Tezuka died, a national art museum held an Osamu Tezuka exhibition. No museum of that stature had ever mounted a manga-related exhibition before. The culture of manga has been supported by many talented artists, most of them inspired by Tezuka, and today, there are numerous manga works that far outstrip novels and films in popularity, scope, and ambition.

The day after Tezuka passed away, a major newspaper eulogized him in an editorial, "Why do Japanese love manga so much? Foreigners apparently find it very strange to see adults engrossed in weekly comic magazines on the train...One explanation for this is that, in their countries, they did not have Osamu Tezuka." Not only was it extremely unusual for a major newspaper, let alone in an editorial, to discuss manga or a manga artist, but this was praise of the highest sort. Yes, manga in Japan today have earned a secure place as a respectable art form.

Osamu Tezuka devoted his entire life to manga, and Phoenix is one of his representative works. I hope you enjoy it.

Takayuki Matsutani  
President, Tezuka Productions

Translated from the Japanese by Akemi Wagnmiller

# PHOENIX AND ME

By Osamu Tezuka



The serialization of *Jungle Taitei* in *Shonen Jump* ended in 1954, and I was at a loss as to what to create next.

Then I saw Stravinsky's famous ballet, *L'oiseau de Feu*. Of course the ballet itself was excellent, but I was especially intrigued by the prima ballerina dancing as the spirit of the phoenix.

The ballet is based on an old Russian legend about a prince that has been captured by a demon. The spirit of the phoenix saves the prince by acting as a guide for his escape. I thought that this passionate, elegant, and mysterious bird would make a wonderful main character comparable to the likes of Leo from *Jungle Taitei*.

Actually, every country has a legend about a mysterious bird such as the phoenix. In these legends, the symbol of supernatural life force takes form as a bird, such as the immortal bird called the Hou-ou from the legend of Hourai-san.

I wanted to utilize this phoenix to portray Japanese history in my own way. The theme would be about man's attachment to life and the complications that arise from greed. The phoenix would be the vehicle that would bring it all together.

As a new challenge, I wanted to start by creating the beginning and then the end of a long story. The story would then return to an ancient period right after the dawn of man. I would then continue to go back and forth, between past and future. In the end, I would set the story where past and future converge—the present. This story, set in the present, would tie all the previous stories together to form a long drama running from the dawn of man all the way to the distant future.

Each story would stand on its own and seem to have nothing to do with the other stories, but the final story would tie everything together—and for the first time, the reader would realize that the structure of the series is such that each story would be just one part of a much longer story. After all, man's history does not have clear divisions or breaks.

Each episode would portray life from various angles and set up different problems. Moreover, the style of each of the episodes would vary from one another, covering a range of genres: science-fiction, war story, mystery, comedy.

I don't know how many more years *Phoenix* will continue, but after it is completed, please go back and read through the whole series again. Otherwise, it will be difficult for me to respond to criticism.

Osamu Tezuka, December 1969

Translated from the Japanese by Andy Nakatani